

## Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 ARA-10 EA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 RSC-01

SR-02 ORM-01 L-02 ABF-01 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05

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SCA-01 SCSE-00 USIA-15 SWF-01 /109 W

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FM USMISSION USUN NEWYORK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7292

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY ROME

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ROME FOR WFC DELEGATION -- KITCHEN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AORG, ECOSOC, UNDRO, UNGA

SUBJ: SECRETARY'S INITIATIVE TO STRENGTHEN UN'S DISASTER  
RELIEF CAPABILITY

1. THIS MSG IS SUMMARY OF REACTION TO U.S. PROPOSAL TO  
STRENGTHEN THE UN'S DISASTER RELIEF CAPABILITY.

2. JUDGING FROM REMARKS MADE IN GENERAL DEBATE ON SUBJECT OF  
DISASTER RELIEF IT WAS CLEAR THAT STAGE FOR US INITIATIVE  
HAD BEEN ADEQUATELY SET IN 57TH ECOSOC WHERE DUTCH INITIATED  
RESOLUTION TO STRENGTHEN UNDRO THROUGH PREPARATION OF A STUDY,  
AS AMENDED BY US TO INCLUDE LANGUAGE FOR 29TH GA RECONSIDERATION  
OF UNDRO POSTS NOT APPROVED BY 28TH GA, WAS ADOPTED (ECOSOC  
RES 1891). BARKOL'S INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT TO THE 29TH  
GA SECOND COMMITTEE, IN WHICH HE INTER ALIA STATED THAT HE HAD  
INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO CARRY OUT HIS MANDATE, FOLLOWED  
IMMEDIATELY BY THE US STATEMENT WHICH OUTLINED OUR INITIATIVE,  
CARRIED FORWARD THIS MOMENTUM. THUS, OVER HALF OF THE  
DELEGATIONS PARTICIPATING IN GENERAL DEBATE STATED THAT  
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UNDRO HAD INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES, WHILE SOMEWHAT MORE THAN

ONE-THIRD OF THE SPEAKERS PUBLICLY WELCOMED THE US OFFER.

3. WITH REGARD TO THE PARTICULARS OF US INITIATIVE, HOWEVER, THERE WAS VERY WIDE SUPPORT FOR THE IDEA THAT THIS INITIATIVE, WHICH WAS DIRECTED AT IMPROVING UNDRO'S COORDINATING FUNCTIONS, SHOULD NOT UNDERMINE UNDRO'S EFFORTS IN THE AREAS OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND PRE-DISASTER PLANNING. WELL OVER HALF OF THE DELEGATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE DEBATE MADE STATEMENTS TO THIS EFFECT. THE STATEMENT BY THE UK DEL WAS TYPICAL: "IT WOULD BE REGRETTABLE IF BY EMPHASIZING THE COORDINATION AND CENTRALIZATION ASPECT OF THE OFFICE, ITS OTHER FUNCTIONS WERE NEGLECTED." IT WAS AS A CONSEQUENCE OF THIS WIDELY HELD VIEW THAT THE ORIGINAL US DRAFT WAS CHANGED, TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THESE CONCERNS. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN HIGHLY DOUBTFUL THAT WE COULD HAVE OBTAINED THE LARGE NUMBER OF CO-SPONSORS (29 IN ADDITION TO THE US) IF THE FINAL DRAFT HAD NOT BEEN SO AMENDED (E.G. THE UK, SWEDES, MANY LDCS, POSSIBLY THE DUTCH).

4. ANOTHER ASPECT THAT WE HAD TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION WAS THE PROVISION IN ECOSOC RES 1891 FOR GA RECONSIDERATION OF THE UNDRO POSTS NOT APPROVED BY THE 29TH GA. NO DEL SPECIFICALLY SPOKE TO THIS SUBJECT, BUT THE UPPER VOLTANS, PROBABLY WITH SOME G-77 BACKING, ARGUED IN INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS THAT NO RES ON STRENGTHENING UNDRO COULD IGNORE ECOSOC RES 1891 IN THIS REGARD. ACCORDINGLY, A MINOR CHANGE WAS MADE IN THE US RES TO FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGE RES 1891. AS A CONSEQUENCE VUPPER VOLTA BECAME A CO-SPONSOR, PROBABLY BRINGING WITH IT AS CO-SPONSORS: SENEGAL, NIGER AND ETHIOPIA. IN SUM, WHILE THERE WAS BROAD BASED SUPPORT IN GENERAL FOR THE US APPROACH THERE WAS EQUALLY BROAD BASED SUPPORT THAT UNDRO HAD TO BE STRENGTHENED NOT ONLY IN THE COORDINATION AREA BUT IN THE AREAS OF DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND PRE-DISASTER PLANNING AS WELL.

5. THERE ARE THREE OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SUBJECT. FIRST, THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE SUPPORT FOR TREATING DISASTER RELIEF IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT RATHER THAN SOLELY AS A HUMANITARIAN CONCERN. AT LEAST EIGHT DELEGATIONS SPOKE TO THIS POINT IN THE GENERAL DEBATE. SECONDLY, ONLY UNCLASSIFIED

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TWO DELEGATIONS (SWEDES, DUTCH) ADDRESSED THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE US RES, STATING THAT AFTER 1977 THE FUNCTIONS SUPPORTED BY VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS SHOULD BE PICKED UP IN THE REGULAR UN BUDGET. THE PAUCITY OF REMARKS ON THE SUBJECT OF FINANCING PROBABLY REFLECTED A DEGREE OF REALISM THAT UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES ANY STRONG PITCH HERE MIGHT JEOPARDIZE THE SECRETARIAT'S SUPPORT. FINALLY, DURING THE COURSE OF THE DEBATE THE DUTCH

ANNOUNCED A VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION (UNSPECIFIED IN AMOUNT)  
TO SUPPORT ALL ELEMENTS OF UNDO, WHILE THE SWEDES ANNOUNED  
A VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTION (ALSO UNSPECIFIED AS TO AMOUNT)  
TO SUPPORT THE PRE-DISASTER PLANNING AND DISASTER PLANNING  
FUNCTIONS (BOTH VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS ARE REFLECTIVE OF  
THE POINT SUMMED UP AT THE END OF PARA 4).  
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